

Democracy depends on an informed populace, and access to diverse sources of information and opinion. One need only read Orwell's 1984 or look at the emphasis on information control by real-life dictators from Hitler to Kim Jong-il to understand how dangerous the current trend toward concentration of media ownership is. An example right now is how little coverage of this issue is getting from commercial mega-media outlets such as Clear Channel. Independent, locally owned media are also vitally important to the health of our regional political, cultural, and social systems. This is far more than an issue of monopoly; railroad monopolies of the 1900's may have threatened the economic well-being of the nation, but the homogenization of our news sources threatens the democratic processes that make our economic freedoms possible. If the railroads had had advertising accounts with a few of our current media conglomerates there's every reason to doubt the public would have supported trust busting - as today, the general public is unaware that the FCC is considering this issue. The agents we rely on to report it - Clear Channel, Viacom, Time Warner, Disney - are the ones who stand to gain from the public ignorance. These conglomerates need to be broken up, not encouraged.